

Hey, are those people riding bicycles, swimming, or running? This is a “historical park” so what is going on?

Part of the history this park preserves is a history of recreational use. We are dedicated to learning about maritime history and Hyde Street Pier serves as an open air museum. The Pier is not the right place to play games or ride your bike; you or other visitors could get hurt. On the other hand, Aquatic Park and the Lagoon are perfect places to get exercise and have been for many years. There are many ways to enjoy a visit to a national park. Let’s explore recreational opportunities this park offers.

There is a long history of people using the area for recreation. Did you notice the swimmers in the lagoon? People have been swimming here since the 1860s. The two white buildings next to the Hyde Street Pier are swim clubs. Look around the outside of them and see if you can find out which club is older.

Look for the big, white, Aquatic Park Bathhouse building and the surrounding bleachers. They were built in the 1930s to encourage people to come down and swim in the lagoon. The National Park Service is now rebuilding the bleachers so people can continue to watch swim races and other events like fireworks on the 4th of July.

Another historic use of the park for recreation is the bocce ball courts. See if you can find the court on the park map at the bottom of this page. Bocce ball is a game that can be traced to the ancient Romans. A small ball is tossed to the other end of the court and then two teams try to “bowl” balls close to the first ball to earn points. Immigrants from Europe brought the game with them to America. The bocce ball courts provide a fun way to remember the city’s Italian American history and explore some of the many cultures that are part of the story of the city.

Many people enjoy biking, skating, walking, and running through the park. Other people come to read, have picnics, or walk their dog. Since we are in the middle of a city, people use this national park in many of the same ways as a city park. With so many people it is important to be safe – watch out for others and don’t speed.

Do you have parks in your hometown? How do you use your hometown parks? There are many ways to enjoy a visit to San Francisco Maritime. Not only does the park offer chances for learning about history, but also has a long history of providing opportunities for exercise and play.

Park Scavenger Hunt

Can you spot kids and adults doing these activities in the park?
Circle each one as you find it. Have fun!

